

DAILY BULLETIN

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U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT RELEASES REPORT ON GLOBAL ANTI-SEMITISM

Reports finds increase in both anti-Semitism and efforts to counter it

By Carrie Lee

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A report released by the U.S. Department of State January 5 examines acts of anti-Semitism -- defined as "hatred toward Jews, individually and as a group, attributed to the Jewish religion and/or ethnicity" -- committed from July 1, 2003, to December 15, 2004, in 62 countries worldwide.

The "Report on Global Anti-Semitism" also details the efforts of governments and other groups to counter anti-Semitism.

The one-time report was mandated by the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-332), in response to the increase of anti-Semitic incidents since the start of the 21st century. When signing the law in October 2004, President Bush noted that "defending freedom also means disrupting the evil of anti-Semitism."

The report finds that the recent increase in global anti-Semitism has four main sources -- traditional, long-standing prejudice against Jews; anti-Israel sentiment that crosses the line between objective criticism of Israeli policies and anti-Semitism; anti-Jewish sentiment expressed by some in Europe's growing Muslim population; and criticism of the United States and globalization that spills over to Israel and Jews.

Although the report focuses on Europe, it covers all regions of the world and finds that anti-Semitism exists even in countries without Jewish communities. However, the report states that in Europe and other regions, many governments, including France, Belgium and Germany, have become more aware of the threat posed by anti-Semitism and are taking effective action to combat it.

According to the report, combating the global problem of anti-Semitism requires a “coordinated multinational approach.” The report cites the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as important tools against anti-Semitism. The United States has played a leading role within these multilateral organizations to raise awareness and propose resolutions to fight anti-Semitism.

The report also emphasizes the role of education in combating anti-Semitism. “Holocaust and tolerance education as well as teacher training provide a potential long-term solution to anti-Semitism,” the report states. The United States has funded numerous such programs in cooperation with the Association of American Holocaust Organizations and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The report recognizes that “the roots of anti-Semitism run deep” and “does not underestimate the difficulty of reversing the recent resurgence of this ancient scourge.” Nevertheless, the United States remains committed to “monitoring and combating anti-Semitism throughout the world as an important human rights and religious freedom issue.” In addition to this report, the State Department monitors global anti-Semitism every six months through its annual International Religious Freedom and country-specific human rights reports.

This report is just one tool to demonstrate U.S. commitment to human rights and international religious freedom, said Ambassador Michael Kozak, assistant secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, the bureau that helped draft the report. Bilateral engagement with the named countries will continue to be a priority of the United States, he added.

The Global Anti-Semitism Review Act also mandated the creation of an office within the State Department dedicated to addressing the issue. Kozak said that the department is already working on setting up this office and that he expects the official opening to come early in President Bush’s second term.

As Bush said when he signed the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act, the United States “will make sure that the ancient impulse of anti-Semitism never finds a home in the modern world.”

The Report on Global Anti-Semitism is available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/40258.htm>

U.S. FIELD HOSPITALS READY FOR DELIVERY, SET UP IN RELIEF ZONE

Prevention of secondary deaths focus of military’s medical effort

By Rebecca Ford Mitchell
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. military is preparing to establish a variety of medical centers in the countries ravaged by the December 26, 2004, tsunami in the Indian Ocean region.

The United States stands ready to provide up to eight field hospitals in a relatively short time frame, Dr. William Wikenwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said in a January 4 Pentagon briefing.

Over the last 10 years, the Air Force has developed modular 25-bed hospitals, including medical equipment and ambulances, which can be flown in on two C-17 cargo planes, according to Lieutenant General George Peach Taylor, Air Force surgeon general. One such hospital, he said, is currently sitting on the ramp at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo ready to be deployed when requested.

The modular hospitals can be fitted together to create 50-, 75- or 100- and 200-bed facilities, Taylor said, adding that the hospitals can come with or without military medical personnel to operate them.

The centers that will be established in Southeast Asia will be largely staffed by local medical providers, Wikenwerder explained, because the U.S. military is assisting the host nations and recognizes the need for a common language between care providers and patients.

“We need to know where to go, we need to be able to get into whatever location we’re going, and we need to be

able to hand it off to a competent authority” after setting up a field hospital and demonstrating how the equipment works, Taylor said.

The Air Force also has available for use even smaller, remote location hospital units that can be carried in on a single C-130 cargo plane.

At the other end of the scale, the Navy’s hospital ship, the USNS Mercy, with 1,000 beds and 12 operating rooms, might also make the two-to-three-week journey from its port in San Diego to the disaster area.

Navy Admiral Thomas Fargo, head of the U.S. Pacific Command, said in a separate January 4 briefing that the Mercy was, that day, undergoing sea trials to ready for possible deployment.

“We think that there may be an opportunity to configure the Mercy with a humanitarian assistance crew -- that might be staffed significantly by nongovernmental organizations and people with significant medical capability who can also provide relief in other forms,” Fargo said.

Wikenwerder also announced that between 100 and 150 additional U.S. forensic experts would be sent to the region in response to Secretary of State Colin Powell’s first-hand assessment that more such help was needed. The United States already has two forensic teams in the relief zone.

Wikenwerder said the U.S. military is concerned with preventing additional deaths among the tsunami survivors. It is making its medical assistance plans through on-going assessments and in anticipation of possible injuries and illness that can occur in disaster conditions.

“Certainly, top among [anticipated concerns] are water-borne diarrheal illnesses, things like E. coli,” he explained. “It’s the same kind of thing that you would get from traveler’s diarrhea. But that’s part of the normal body materials that, once it gets out into the water, can be infectious and affect people very easily. Also, cholera, a very serious disease, [is a possible problem]. Hepatitis A is another waterborne infectious disease.”

“And then, of course,” he continued, “there are respiratory diseases -- the typical viruses and bacteria that affect people in general. Certainly, measles is another possibility. And then, also in the coming weeks, we will have to be looking out for things like dengue and malaria.”

“There are also the problems of injuries that can occur with so much loose material around; and during efforts to reconstruct or clear lots of heavy materials, people get hurt,” Wikenwerder said, while noting that, so far during the humanitarian effort, no outbreak of disease has been reported.

The defense official said that the U.S. military believes it can be most helpful in two areas of medical assistance: in creating medical facilities where they are needed that can be used by medical providers of the host nations as well as nongovernmental organizations; and in coordinating logistics.

“Getting the right aid to the right place and the right person at the right time is really the key task at hand, and this applies to medicines, vaccines, and other medical materials,” Wikenwerder said.

“Our hearts and thoughts go out to the people of that whole region,” he said. “We’re here to help. We want to help. We’re prepared to help.”

For additional information go to “U.S. Response to Tsunami and Earthquake in Asia” at: http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/south_asia/tsunamis.html

STATE DEPARTMENT RECAPS DETAILS OF IRAQI ELECTION

Iraqis prepare for January 30 legislative elections

Following is a fact sheet issued by the State Department January 5 reviewing details of the upcoming Iraqi legislative elections:

U.S. Department of State Fact Sheet: Iraqi Elections

On January 30, 2005, the Iraqi people will elect a 275-member Transitional National Assembly (TNA), with the goal of having at least 25 percent female representation. The TNA will:

- Serve as Iraq’s national legislature for a transition period.

- Name a Presidency Council, consisting of a President and two Vice Presidents (the Presidency Council will

appoint a Prime Minister) and approve the appointment of the Prime Minister and his/her selection of cabinet ministers.)

-- Draft Iraq's new constitution, which will be presented to the Iraqi people for their approval in a national referendum in October 2005. (If the constitution is approved, Iraq is expected to elect a fully constitutional government in December 2005.)

A provisional voter registration list of nearly 14 million names, based on the food ration public distribution database, has been completed. The voter registration process consists of validating, and possibly adding, names or correcting information on the provisional voter registration list. Iraqis had until December 15 to complete this process.

More than 500 voter registration centers were established to help Iraqis verify their registration. Iraqis will vote on Election Day in thousands of voting centers across Iraq.

More than 100 political entities have submitted candidate lists. Nine coalitions of political parties, 74 individual political parties, and several independents representing a broad cross-section of Iraq have registered to participate in the January 30 election, demonstrating enthusiasm for the political process.

The Transitional National Assembly election will be conducted according to a closed list proportional representation system with the entire country considered as a single electoral district.

In addition to the election of a Transitional National Assembly, the Transitional Administrative Law calls for the election of provincial councils and a Kurdistan National Assembly. These elections will also be held on January 30.

-- The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) was established to supervise the elections and ensure a fair and transparent process.

-- The UN Electoral Assistance Division is advising the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq. Other non-governmental organizations are providing technical support and assistance to the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq and the Iraqi Interim Government.

-- The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq and

various non-governmental organizations are engaged in a voter education campaign.

-- The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq has 150 staff at its national headquarters, 126 at governorate offices, 120 trainers, and more than 6,000 electoral workers at the Voter Registration Centers throughout Iraq.

-- The role of the United States and the Coalition is limited and consists primarily of providing financial support for the cost of the mechanics of the election. The United States has provided more than \$40 million to help the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq conduct elections. Japan has pledged \$40 million and the EU pledged \$38 million for the election effort.

-- International support for Iraq's elections is essential. Military forces from 28 nations are working alongside Iraqi forces, helping to establish stability and security throughout Iraq. Coalition forces will continue to provide area security for polling day.

After the January 30, 2005 election:

The votes will be tabulated and winners declared.

The Transitional National Assembly is expected to be seated in mid-February.

The Assembly will appoint a Presidency Council, consisting of a President and two Deputy Presidents.

The Presidency Council will appoint a Prime Minister and, on his or her recommendation, cabinet ministers to run the Iraqi government's various ministries.

The Prime Minister and his cabinet must receive a vote of confidence by a simple majority of the Transitional National Assembly before commencing work as a government.

The Transitional National Assembly will draft a new Iraqi constitution.

The draft constitution is to be presented for approval to the Iraqi people in a national referendum in October 2005.

By the end of 2005, the Iraqi people are expected to elect a new national government under a new, permanent constitution.

HIGH-LEVEL U.S. DELEGATION TO OBSERVE PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS

United States hopes Israeli-Palestinian cooperation continues after elections

The United States will send a high-level delegation to observe the January 9 Palestinian presidential election. The delegation will include senators John Sununu and Joseph Biden from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as well as Palestinian-American community leaders George Salem and Ziad Asali.

The delegation will meet with Israeli and Palestinian officials and visit polling sites in an effort to ensure that the election process is free and fair.

In a January 4 statement, State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said that the United States is working with both the Israelis and the Palestinians to support successful administration of the election. He added that the United States hopes the cooperation exhibited by the two parties in the period leading up to the election will continue afterward and ultimately lead to the "realization of the President's vision of two states living side by side in peace and security."

Palestinians go to the polls January 9 to choose a successor to the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who died November 11, 2004, at the age of 75. Arafat had been the president of the Palestinian Authority since his election in 1996. There are seven candidates vying for the position in the upcoming election.

In an effort to ensure a smooth election process, Israel has agreed to withdraw from West Bank towns for 72 hours during the election period. Israel also is allowing East Jerusalem's 230,000 Arab residents to participate in the elections as absentee voters.

Following is the text of the State Department statement:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Statement by Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli
January 4, 2005

Official Observer Delegation for January 9 Palestinian Presidential Election

The United States is sending an Official U.S. Observer Delegation to the January 9, 2005 Palestinian Presidential Election. The delegation will be led by Sena-

tors John Sununu (R - NH) and Joseph R Biden, Jr. (D - DE) of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and will include four Congressional staff members, and prominent Palestinian-Americans George Salem and Ziad Asali. David Pearce, U.S. Consul General, Jerusalem, will join the delegation when it arrives.

The U.S. Delegation will visit polling sites, meet with senior Israeli and Palestinian officials and prior to departing, will make an assessment of the election process. The Delegation's visit will demonstrate that the U.S. is fully committed to a free, fair election process that produces a credible result. This outcome will require close coordination between Israel and the Palestinians, and we are working with both parties to support successful administration of the election. We recognize the extent of Israeli and Palestinian cooperative efforts during the period leading to the elections. We hope that this cooperation will continue and will lead to further steps toward realization of the President's vision of two states living side by side in peace and security.

Please Note: Most texts and transcript mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage: www.usmission.ch

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